

Running Up That Hill

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Running Up That Hill

by [simal](#)

Summary

Flashes in his memory of the time they had together.

The freedom he had felt. The freedom Tubbo and he had.

But then the other memories flashed, “I really miss you Tubbo.” The words tumbling out before he could stop himself.

Tubbo turned rising up on his arms, “You mean you missed me Tommy, past tense, I’m here right now.”

Tommy collapsed.

(In which Tommy gets a new family but still needs to work through some trauma.)

or I wanted to write a foster au, dealing with mental health, grief and neurodivergent teens.

also yes there is a scene inspired by this song and the Max running scene :)

Notes

I just want to preface this. I’m probably not going to in depth edit all the chapters again, but they are all completed!

Also any topics I’ve brought in, I’ve deeply researched or have personal experiences with! But please do let me know if something is triggering or not respectfully written.

I appreciate feedback! enjoy! <3

- Inspired by [take this compass, follow it home](#) by [lightning_anon](#)
- Inspired by [Wasting Your Time](#) by [shutupanakin](#)

Chapter 1

Tommy had been through houses. Four to be exact.

Granted he wasn't acting the best in the first two, he had been quiet and reserved but he had just lost his family at the time, he knew it was reasonable. House 3 were just jerks in his opinion, they called him crazy after two months in and kicked him right back into the group house. Something about talking to himself a lot.

House 4 had been the worst though, the most recent one, although over 5 months ago. He had to call Ranboo to come find him in some random alleyway after the family became angry at him for cursing out gods name. They were extremely religious you could say.

Taking him to his current predicament, he was once again stuck in his social workers office to confront a new family. Tommy's social worker was talking to him but he couldn't put the words together in his mind.

It was probably the same old “ *we are running out of space, too many kids* ” or something about how “ *this family are different* ”

Tommy had heard it all before. He reckoned he had about one month for this new house, his record was two and he had no intention of beating it. It wasn't like foster care people were evil, it was just very clear Tommy was too loud for some and or too depressed for others. He was nearly 18 anyway, just two more years till he's gone for good.

He snapped his attention back to his social worker who was introducing the man who was taking Tommy in, something about it being an emergency placement which made no sense to Tommy because he knew you didn't get to meet the people in advance if it was an emergency.

The man smiled at Tommy as his social worker introduced him, “Tommy this is Phil, he's got two other sons at home both of them were also fostered before he adopted them.” Tommy grimaced at that, house 2 had done the same process with three other kids, three of which did not take a liking to Tommy.

He came back with bruises from that House when they had sent him back.

“Hey mate?” Phil calmly spoke, trying to ease Tommy's attention back to him. “You alright?”

Tommy simply nodded in response not wanting to cause the wrong impression, he didn't know what this Phil man wanted but if he had to get along with him he would try his best.

His social worker suspected Tommy wouldn't get much out anyway and started talking about his record, something about his impulsiveness.

Tommy didn't pay too much attention opting to not have to listen about his many issues.

He heard Phil getting up from the seat and heading for the door, but he knelt down to Tommy's level first, softly speaking "Hey mate, sorry we didn't get to speak much but hopefully I'll see you tomorrow?"

Tommy nodded in acknowledgement, he knew he had no choice in the matter though, he would see Phil tomorrow because he'd be stuck in Phil's house with Phil's sons. The group home was becoming overcrowded, and Tommy being one of the older kids was needed to leave, he had been in the home for 5 months which was much longer than most kids stayed at any one time.

His social worker had made an exception after his last house and the incident, Ranboo had been there for 4 months after as well but he was sent to another foster home a few weeks ago, meaning Tommy was getting lonely staying here anyway.

Ranboo had grown up in foster care, he was 17 now but he had experienced all sorts of homes so Tommy messaged him on his phone about what he thinks of Phil and two foster to adopted kids, the general formula for Tommy seems like a bad mix but that was only his one experience.

Ranboo message popped up on his phone,

that sounds kinda good tom, not as chaotic as the second house i hope, but message me if you need me to come find you!

Tommy sighed, maybe he would try not to be overly pessimistic. Ranboo had found a foster home which was overly kind to him, something about a young pink haired woman who owned a bakery. Tommy was glad that Ranboo was okay and safe, he just wishes it didn't leave him alone.

He allowed his mind to drift off and sleep, he knew he had school work to do but he supposed he wouldn't have to do any of it since he would have to transfer if he was moving anyway.

Only one month, he countered. They'll be enough space in the group for him to come back after one month. He would just have to hold out. He couldn't risk being transferred far away from Ranboo.

He couldn't risk losing him too.

The next morning Tommy made his way down with the one backpack he had over his shoulders, no one cared to wave him off goodbye, but he didn't really have any friends in the group home that he would wave off he supposed.

Tommy spots his social worker in front of her car, well he guesses it's her car. He really should learn her name, he thinks to himself.

Tommy feels like he is dissociating the entire car ride to Phil's, but nevertheless they arrive in around 40 minutes once Tommy spots the clock, mentally he notes that he isn't that far from the group home if he was to every have to run from the home.

His social worker leads him into Phil's doorstep, he glances up at the house, not overly pricey but big enough for a family he supposes. The doorbell rings and a tall figure opens the door, towering over Tommy.

"Hey! I'm Wilbur, sorry come in, Phil isn't back yet but please sit down, can I get you anything to drink?" The blur of words leave Tommy mind a bit lost, the guy, Wilbur, he figures is one of Phil's sons. He watches Wilbur loop around to their kitchen and grab water for them both and briefly he goes and calls for someone upstairs.

Tommy feels a hand pull him down to the sofa, his Social worker stares at him, urging him to pay attention he supposes. He doesn't really care though and proceeds to fizzle out his mind.

"Really, I'm sorry, Phil went out to get some stuff for Tommy, we thought you'd be a bit longer aha" Wilbur awkwardly chuckles, as another teen comes toppling down the stairs, long pink hair swaying behind him.

He nodded towards Tommy and proceeded to sit down on one of the kitchen stools.

Wilbur himself began to sit down on the sofa opposite Tommy, "that's Techno," he introduces, "he doesn't talk much but we're both excited to meet you, Tommy."

Tommy ears perked up at that, at the very least he could befriend the two teens he was going to be stuck with for a month.

"I'm Tommy," he starts, his voice slightly cracking, "I mean you already knew that but still." He silently curses himself, it's not that he isn't much of a talker. In fact he loves talking to people he actually likes, Ranboo would silently listen as Tommy rambled on about his interests. But since Ranboo had been gone Tommy didn't really have many other people to talk to.

Tommy could feel his social worker glancing at her watch in frustration, she hastily stood up exclaiming how she had to get going and wished Tommy luck. She rushed out the door briefly calling that she hopes Wilbur and Techno have a good day.

Tommy turns to Wilbur who sighs, *oh shit*, he panicked, was it all for show?

“That was kinda bad shouldn’t she have to wait for Phil before just leaving you?” He questions calmly, maybe he wasn’t frustrated with Tommy.

He hears Techno briefly huff, “I swear those people just don’t care till something goes wrong,” Tommy smiles slightly, they get it. They understand.

Both Wilbur and Techno seem to be waiting for a response from Tommy, his input on the situation. So he opens his mouth “Yeah I don’t even know her name to be honest,” he exclaims, he sees Wilbur giggle. Tommy feels a swell of pride in his chest, he just made someone other than Ranboo laugh, and sometimes he was pretty sure Ranboo only laughed to make Tommy feel better.

Techno began to stand, “Hey since Phil isn’t back yet, want me to show you your room?”

Wilbur appeared a bit shocked at Techno offering to do social interaction, but smiles towards Tommy encouraging him to take up the offer.

“Yeah sure big man,” Tommy responds, he follows after Techno as he makes his way upstairs. He points towards the first door explaining how it was Phil’s room and Techno’s room, the second floor had a Phil’s office and also Tommy’s room which Techno pointed out was bigger than Techno’s. Tommy had secretly held back a grin at that fact, feeling a sense of power with that small detail.

The last floor had the most suspicious stairs, Techno had managed to climb up perfectly without hesitation but Tommy wasn’t so sure, they did look like they were about to collapse at any given moment.

He heard Techno call for him at the top, *oh fuck it*, he decides might as well do it. He cautiously climbs up to be met with a large attic room, it was a mess, but it was large. Tommy took that note into the back of his mind, good to know Phil doesn’t mind untidy rooms.

“And finally this room is Wilbur’s it’s a bit of a mess though,” Techno claimed as he kicked a jumper on the floor, Tommy nodded but stared at Techno’s finger fiddling with a little trinket.

Techno raised an eyebrow at him, questioning his glance. But put the pieces together as Tommy began to focus on the area around him spotting a guitar. He heard Techno’s monotone voice begin to speak up, “uh it’s a fiddle toy, like so I can stim,”

Tommy glanced back at him nodding, “that’s cool big man,” feeling a need to respond as if Techno had just opened up to him. They both hear a call from downstairs as the front door opens.

Techno grunts “Phil’s back, we should head down” keeping the sentence short. Tommy smiles in response, wanting to gain a bond with the strange pink haired teen.

As they headed down Tommy perks up asking how old Techno is, but it was Tommy's of inviting Techno speak a bit more. "Urm 18," he responded making it short again, Tommy sighed internally until Techno spoke up again, "and uh Wilbur is like 19 but he's only like a few months older."

Tommy smiles "oh that's cool, I'm 16 by the way," before cutting their conversation off as Phil approaches Tommy.

"Hey mate! Sorry I wasn't in but welcome to the family," he speaks, Tommy flushing at the family comment, he was only temporarily here.

Phil continues about letting Tommy settle into his room, and how he'll call him down for dinner. Tommy glad to finally have some time to himself runs up to his room to unpack, he wanted to take a shower but he wasn't sure on the rules and he'd rather not worry about a punishment right now. House number 1 had stopped giving him food or the very minimal amount after he had flunked a school test.

He later on his bed, quietly laying in the silence, his window view was directly of the sky, which was beginning to grow dark as winter approached. Tommy sent a quick text to Ranboo letting him know that he was safe, for now.

A knock echoed through his room, and Wilbur voice came from the other side asking permission to come in, he responded with a yeah sure and watched as the freakishly tall guy walked in. His beanie from earlier had been disregarded leaving his brown hair to fluff around.

"Hey Toms, can I sit?" Tommy nodded in response, ignoring the endearing nickname and just watching Wilbur toss himself on the bed and practically man spread across it.

"Big man, move up," Tommy glared jokily in response, Wilbur just hummed in response with a dumb grin plastered on his face, not moving one inch. Tommy sighed and just shrunk down to lay on the same level as him.

"So Techno told me you're 16?" Tommy turned to Wilbur hoping this man wasn't here for small talk, Tommy couldn't be bothered for small talk. He nodded in response to the question, but waited for Wilbur's next response.

"I've always wanted another younger brother." Wilbur grins, Tommy turns towards Wilbur wide eyes and flustered. That went from small talk to full on very quickly. Tommy diverts his mind to a question in response, he can't let Wilbur get attached he was only here for one month.

"Am I allowed to shower?" He stuttered, his words fumbled and he wasn't bothered to try make them sound less demanding.

Wilbur just grins in response, reaching out and ruffling Tommy's golden hair "Course Toms, the showers on the opposite side of Phil's office door," Tommy stumbles out the bed and grabs his spare clothes.

“We share the same bathroom, but Phil just got you some products, but don’t worry just use whatever ones you want I couldn’t care less.”

Tommy just nods, “urm do you have any towels?” Wilbur stand and heads for Tommys wardrobe and pulls out a towel. Handing it to Tommy who begins to back away towards the door to leave, until he hears Wilbur call behind him “oh yeah, Phil wanted me to let you know dinner will be ready in a bit and we can go over the rules then!”

Tommy froze in his tracks, but then went for the bathroom, rushing in and closing the door, letting out a breath as he clenched his eyes closed.

Oh yeah, rules . He sighed, maybe this place will be different. Maybe. Probably not.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Family bonding in all ways.

(Basically they all talk and open up whoop)

tw - brief mention of drugs

Tommy could hear Phil's voice echo for him to come down after he turned off the shower, he hastily put on his clothes, rushing down, he didn't want to start of dinner with a punishment.

Wilbur and Techno looked up at his distressed face as he approached the table, Tommy couldn't deal with the eyes on him coughing out an instant response, "do I look like your dead parents or something?"

Techno and Wilbur stared up at him with wide eyes, even Phil had turned with a shocked expression on his face

Oh god what did I just say?

Tommy may have not been getting a punishment earlier but he definitely was now.

Phil cleared his throat from the kitchen, bringing the pot of food down to dinner table where Techno and Wilbur sat opposite each other, Phil took the spot next to Techno, which left a spot for Tommy next to Wilbur.

Tommy was still stood in shock, although everyone else was just looking at Phil, ready for his input. "I think on that note we should probably talk about the rules?" he voice held no menace but Tommy supposed it was all an act before his anger was unleashed. Or maybe he didn't care because the insult was towards Techno and Wilbur, maybe he would just face the wrath of them after? His mind was left stressed out from the impending feeling of punishment.

Wilbur was the next voice Tommy heard speak up, "Hey Toms why don't you sit down," Tommy head turned to Wilbur, his eyes looked inviting, like he wasn't mad.

Maybe they were all going to do a facade until Phil said what his punishment is, Tommy sighed sitting down. Everyone at the table seemed tense, until Wilbur spoke up again this

time turned towards Tommy, “Toms no one is mad at you, I’m sure Phil will explain the rules after, but it’s okay you aren’t in trouble,” Tommy looked up at Techno’s and Phil’s expressions, both of which looked of agreement. Although Techno’s didn’t hold a smile, his expression held no anger while he fiddled away at his fidget. Phil’s was a calm but smiling face, he seemed to be masking worry underneath it as well.

Was Phil worried for Tommy?

Had anyone other than Ranboo ever been worried for Tommy, at least not for a long time.

Phil was the next one to speak up, his voice laced with a soothing undertone, “Tommy I feel I should mention this quickly, but we don’t do punishments here okay? I am your guardian and I care about you and your safety and I will not do something to jeopardise that for a sake of a stupid punishment. Nor do I think anyone should, by your anxiety response, I’m guessing something has happened in the past?” Phil’s question was inviting Tommy to open up, but he didn’t feel ready yet nor did he understand what the hell Phil meant by no punishments, he must be lying.

Techno had stopped fidgeting with his cube in the midst of the conversation, stating to put his pasta onto his plate, Wilbur followed in pursuit while also putting some in for Tommy. Although Tommy ate along with everyone in the silence, other than Wilbur’s humming, he was still looking down and avoiding eye contact.

Wilbur sighed beside him, finishing his last bite and pushing his plate the the side. Although Tommy wasn’t finished he stared up at Wilbur who seemed to want to say something.

“I don’t know if this will help Toms, but I feel maybe I should tell you how I ended up with Phil here?” He paused giving Tommy a moment to response, Tommy continued to stare into his eyes.

He was trying to make Tommy connect, and although Tommy felt it was all futile, he did appreciate the thought. He slowly nodded, processing his thoughts and actions in one.

Wilbur grinned in return, but as his mind went to think how to phrase his back story, his face falling solemn. “My parents they, uh they weren’t the best let’s say,” Wilbur began, Tommy briefly glanced at Phil who smiled encouragingly at Wilbur, they really did seem like family, like they cared.

“My mother she was an addict, never really saw her, I don’t think, I was too young to exactly remember.” He spoke with confidence, like this story didn’t impact him, Tommy wished he could relate on that front, talking about his past family’s his real family seemed impossible.

Tommy waited as Wilbur seemed frustrated, he looked angry at whatever he was about to refer to, “She wasn’t always bad though, it was my fathers doing, he was a bad guy and a bad influence and in the end his influence doomed them both, she’s dead”

Wilbur’s voice was laced with a bitter tone, but Tommy tried not to dwell on his lack of expansion on the topic of his father and just nodded in response to Wilbur.

He hoped his expression held his condolences, because his throat felt too dry to respond but Wilbur seemed to grasp that already and just nodded back to Tommy and proceeded to stand up clearing his dishes away. Tommy briefly heard Phil telling him he was allowed to go back to his room if he wanted, or something about the TV, but his attention was too derailed by Wilbur leaving.

He choose to open up, he can't be mad Tommy didn't, surely? *Right ?*

Huffing, Techno snapped out Tommy out his thoughts as he left the table, leaving his dishes for Wilbur and Phil to deal with it seemed. Usually, on the first night Tommy made an effort to help with chores, to seem like he wasn't just a nuisance and to avoid any punishments.

But Phil said he didn't need to here. This place was different apparently, he kept trying to convince himself it was the same because he didn't need the disappointment. He needed to hold out though, for Ranboo. With that thought of Ranboo he rushed upstairs, politely thanking Phil for the meal while stepping up onto the stairs.

For a few hours he remained in his room, on discord call to Ranboo, who let him know he was proud Tommy was trying to make it work and how Techno sounded pretty cool. Part of Tommy wanted to explain Wilbur's past to Ranboo, he knew Ranboo had lost his parents to their drug addiction and part of him wanted to ask him how to approach the topic around Wilbur. He didn't want to mess up with Wilbur.

Alas, he ended up deciding not to, scared to feel guilty if Ranboo was uncomfortable talking about it. When they had first met Tommy had been his possessive self and not been accustomed to sharing time of people he cared about, therefore meaning they weren't too close but Ranboo was always round their house with Tubbo.

After the accident when Tommy joined foster care, Ranboo had been the first to support him, Tommy had had no previous knowledge in Ranboo's living situation, assuming he was fine even though he slept round too much and sometimes had scattered bruises which he'd blame on his clumsiness, Tommy had always assumed his living situation wasn't the issue. But clearly part of it was, and in time Tommy began to have to same problems, the same fate as Ranboo. Funny how things change so quickly.

How one accident could change everything.

After what seemed to be a few hours, Tommy heard a simple tapping on the window, turning to see the large figure of Wilbur crouched over. Tommy quickly ended the call with Ranboo reassuring he was safe and just wanting to rest. He did not want to let Ranboo know he was going to talk his Wilbur.

He pulled up the window, Wilbur's inviting smile illuminating in the dark night, he reached out his hand towards Tommy, "come on watch the stars with me Toms," Tommy choose not to think of it like Wilbur extending the olive branch, just him wanting company out of pure loneliness.

Either way, he grabbed Wilbur's palm and climbed out of the room. What did he have to lose? *Right?*

The roof surprising didn't even creak under the added weight of Tommy, he turned to a laying Wilbur, joining him but propping himself up on his elbows finding the smooth surface of the roof was okay to lean on.

For a moment there was no words exchanged between the two of them, they simply both admired the sky. Tommy thoughts drifted away from Wilbur, and back to his past he remembered when him and Tubbo used to sneak out for the same purpose. They'd sit and watch the stars for hours, part of them imaging that they were alone in the world, just the two of them against the world.

His heart ached for Tubbo, he missed his best friend.

Trying to avoid the sick feeling which overcame Tommy, he fully succumbed himself to the roof, falling flat onto his back like Wilbur, using his hands as a pillow to his head.

Wilbur took the movement as an opportunity to speak up, "You know Phil is a good guy Toms, he's just wanting to do the best for us."

Although Tommy couldn't sense a single hint of a lie behind Wilbur's words, he still couldn't trust him. Just like every foster home he'd been in, every temporary family, he knew it was always just that, temporary. No family was permanent and Tommy was always left alone in the end.

He nodded nevertheless, not wanting to hurt Wilbur's feelings.

Since when did Tommy care about some random teens feelings.

Clearly Wilbur didn't buy it. "Seriously Toms, Techno and I we may be complicated, but Phil's only ever tried to do right by us." He sighed, "even at my worst point here, Phil still supported me."

Wilbur's word echoed within Tommy's mind, the unspoken *like parents should* .

Tommy decided to push his luck, I mean Wilbur called him out here to brag about Phil, he might as well pry.

"What's the worst thing, the worst point then Wilbur, what's the moment that you realised he was the same as the ones before?" Tommy voice held a tone of menace, he knew deep down he didn't really want an answer. Knowing how deep Phil's care went wasn't exactly a helping factor in accepting that this was another temporary family in the long run.

Silence pursued, Tommy assuming Wilbur wasn't going to respond, until he laughed lightly, "I guess I should've guessed you would ask," his voice held no malice, continuing he spoke softly, opposing his voice confidence from his earlier backstory. "My dad, I went to visit him."

Tommy lifted an eyebrow, from their conversation he just had assumed Wilbur's parents were both gone. Wilbur must have sensed the confusion speaking up again, "he was in jail, for the distribution of drugs." Wilbur sighed "My mums death anniversary had been the day before, I had only been with Phil for two months at that point. It was a whole new world for me, Techno and Phil were this fresh breath of air from my old environment."

Tommy frowned at that, sensing this really was a hard topic for Wilbur to talk about but the pride that flooded his voice when he mentioned Techno and Phil made Tommy's heart swell. Oh how he missed that.

"But still I was so angry that night and neither could help, Techno doesn't deal with others emotions well and Phil isn't one who can manage anger, so while they let me cool off I ran," Wilbur continued.

"Just ran?" Tommy shot back.

"Well I ran off to see my dad, I just wanted to make him hurt, to ruin his life like he'd ruin my mother's and mine, scream how he ruined my childhood but when I got there I just broke down at the front of the jail, I couldn't bring myself to face him."

Tommy knew he couldn't offer much guidance with his words, he'd heard Ranboo ramble about his past, heck even the younger kids at the group home he could help. But this was Wilbur, he didn't know him enough.

Not yet at least, a voice whispered at the back of his mind.

He did the next best thing, gripping Wilbur's hand and allowing him to continue, he needed the whole story, as selfish as it was, he wanted to know how bad Phil could be mad.

"Was Phil mad?" He inquired.

Wilbur laughed, "Of course Phil was mad. I'm legally not allowed to see my dad." Wilbur stopped in thought choosing his next words carefully, "But he found me at the front of the prison crying and he just held me,"

Tommy grimaced waiting for the worst part to come, but what Wilbur spoke was nothing short of a surprise "and then he took me out to get food, comforted me the entire night and a week later he asked to adopt me, claiming he could never replace what I had lost out in childhood from my dad but he promised to try his best to make me teenage years better."

Wilbur seemed lost in the memory, smiling at the stars. This damn family, Tommy thought to himself. Just as Tommy thought he was done, Wilbur began again, "He obviously removed some of my privileges like going out for longer then a certain amount of time, and I needed a tracker on my phone for a while."

“Is that like the rules?”

Wilbur nodded, “Yeah Phil will always respect your privacy, but if it you are a danger to yourself, or someone else he will put in necessary requirements, to like counter it.”

Tommy sighed, most people who said that “*it’s for you*” were using it as a defence for their unreasonable actions. Wilbur must have had a sixth sense, or maybe he had once thought the same. “Phil won’t ever set anything in place without discussing it with you first Toms, if it makes you uncomfortable or you feel it’s unreasonable he will negotiate I promise, he cares.”

Tommy genuinely believed the sincerity in the olders voice, “I believe you big man.”

Wilbur smiled back, taking in another moment to soak in the stars above them. The night was really pretty.

“So why are you out here anyway?” Tommy questioned, he didn’t mean to sound accusatory but he couldn’t help the time slipping out.

“I mean, to be honest, I used to smoke so to hide it from Phil and Techno I used to come out here. But I stopped recently, Techno found out and got so angry he refused to talk to me for weeks, so it gave it up.”

He was willing to give it up that fast just for Techno? Tommy suspected this family was close before, but he was positive now.

And like always he was just the odd one out.

Wilbur huffed, laughing a bit as he did “I’ve told you so much trauma in one day, sorry for trauma dumping Toms, it’s literally your first night.”

Tommy smiled at the gesture, but he knew he had either asked Wilbur the questions or like at dinner, Wilbur was just trying to comfort him. Although he didn’t belong here, he appreciated the kindness.

“It’s okay Will, I didn’t think it was to be honest.” Tommy hummed in response, he began to ramble the words tumbling out of his mouth “My family, you were wondering earlier and I know Phil must know because he read my file, but you didn’t know my age so I’m guessing you didn’t” his throat slightly closing up at the thought of talking about this topic, “they died, in a car crash when I was 14.”

He failed to mentioned what exactly caused that car crash. The report failed to mention it. So therefore part of Tommy tried to believe he could do the same.

It was still his fault.

Wilbur turned to face Tommy, Tommy glanced towards him, eyebrow raised waiting for his response.

“Do you miss them?”

Tommy turned back towards to stars, he knew the answer inside was yes, but he also knew the truth of the fact was what he said next “I don’t let myself think about them too much, what’s the point of thinking about what I lost, you know?”

Wilbur nodded, opting to stay silent. Tommy was glad he hadn’t hit with the ‘I’m sorry for your loss’ bullshit. He knew the words often came from a good place, but he didn’t need to hear how ‘sorry’ people were. It didn’t bring them back and it didn’t change what happened, or rather how it happened.

Tommy could feel like slight exhaustion fall over him, turning into Wilbur’s side to allow his head to rest more comfortable and letting his eyes shut, if Wilbur thought anything about it he didn’t mention it.

Tommy briefly heard Wilbur telling him they should go inside and sleep if Tommy was tired, but Tommy remained still head pressing further into Wilbur’s chest. He was exhausted otherwise he’d never do this, at least that’s what he said to himself.

“What about Techno?” He whispers, wanting this moment to last a little longer even if he would never admit that to anyone.

“What about him?” Wilbur hummed back.

“How’d he end up here?” Tommy squinted his eyes open to look up at Wilbur by tilting his head up.

Wilbur tried to shrug in response, as best as he could with Tommy curled up on his side. “Oh he was here years before me, as soon as he was seven he was in fosters homes and Phil was like the second or something.”

Tommy nodded in response tucking his head back into Wilbur’s chest, feeling the gentle breathing of Wilbur, inhaling and exhaling.

They both just soaked in the stars and the next morning when Tommy woke couldn’t remember how he managed to make it back into his bed, but he did awake with a gentle smile on his face.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

shopping with phil! bonding with Phil! all praise philza!

Tommy had woken up expecting to be given a long list of chores, almost impossible for one person but still get yelled at for not completing it.

It had been the way he'd started at every other house. All four.

But what shocked him was when Phil had politely asked him over breakfast if he wanted to accompany him in shopping, he didn't really think he had a choice, but in all honesty Phil seemed to be genuinely asking Tommy, as if he cared about his opinion.

Leading them to where they are now, on the way back from the mall, Tommy had acquired a few new sets of clothes. It wasn't uncommon for him to get new clothes, he was a growing teenager meaning at some point the group home had to accommodate for his height.

He still had never been this spoilt in a foster home, Phil had brought him anything he even glanced at a second too long for his room. Including a small cow plushie, which Tommy refused to admit he actually wanted. It was so cute and soft, and Tommy really liked cows.

Phil was currently answering Tommy's questions, he had protested against Phil buying him so much and intended to make him know it. His response seemed reasonable to him, no one ever did this much for him. Phil however seemed to disagree, his words the entire morning had followed along the lines of "Tommy, you need clothes," and some other bullshit about Tommy deserving someone treating him to nice things but he really disregarded that part of it.

In fact he was currently so immersed in the music, Phil's voice wasn't even background noise, his voice simply was gone.

Until he heard him mention "school".

Now contrary to all his social workers that he'd been with, Tommy didn't hate school. In fact he liked the idea of the learning and socialising, but nevertheless he's always struggled in school. He couldn't concentrate for a long period of times or deal with the constant reminders of him needing to listen to the rules.

He didn't like being told what to do, it made him uneasy.

One his previous foster homes had opted to home school him, but that was more so they could teach him all the in and outs of their religion.

Tommy shivered, trying to discard the memory of that home. Phil must've noted Tommy's distress, he placed a hand on Tommy's shoulder lightly shaking him out his thoughts.

Once Tommy came back to reality, he could see the car had stopped, but they weren't home. It seemed Phil had stopped on the side of the road to help calm Tommy down, *did he really care that much?*

"Tommy, are you alright? Phil's muttered softly, not wanting to overwhelm Tommy while he seemed in distress. Tommy pretend to calm from his thoughts and nodded in response to Phil's question.

Suddenly the car started again, even though it seemed Phil didn't really believe Tommy's response, he opted to make their way home before distressing him any further, they needed to finish this conversation.

His plan fell through as soon as they reached home, Tommy jumped out the car not bothering with his bags of items and ran upstairs, past two confused teens and slammed his door shut, he didn't want to mess up another foster home for a reason he couldn't help.

The muttering so could be heard from downstairs, clearly no one was making an approach to confront Tommy which he was appreciative of, he was afraid he'd have a meltdown if they did ask.

Another part of his mind wondered to why he cared what this family thought, he wasn't planning on staying long.

They don't want you. No one wants you.

Tommy stayed in his closed room, not moving for hours until he heard a brief knock and huff from Techno calling him for dinner.

But Tommy still didn't move.

He could hear more muffled noise from downstairs, but he choose to stay still sitting at his door, back against the wall. He heard another knock after lighter footsteps up the stairs, must be Phil then, Techno and Wilbur both stopped when walking Tommy had observed. His suspicions were proved when he heard Phil speak outside his door, in the same soft tone from earlier, "Hey Tommy, can I come in?"

Tommy ignored him, not having the energy to respond, Phil the wise man he seemed to be didn't pry any further, but he didn't leave without letting Tommy know he hoped he was okay and that he was welcome to join them anytime throughout dinner but if not Phil would leave his dinner on the kitchen counter to have it whenever.

Tommy heard another concerned sigh from him before he was once again left alone, he managed to pull himself off the floor and crawl into bed. He still didn't really understand how thinking about his past foster home dragged into such a dark place so quickly but he couldn't do much now but given into it he decides.

A sense of guilt builds up from not messaging Ranboo that day and not collecting the new things Phil bought him, usually when either of them move to a new foster home they make sure to message each other every day, at least for the first few weeks to make sure they are safe, but Tommy really didn't have the energy to message him tonight. Hoping he wouldn't put Ranboo into panic and Phil wouldn't be too mad about him leaving his stuff downstairs he drifted off to sleep, despite it only being 7pm.

Tommy's skin pricked waking up from the heat, he cursed himself for not opening the window, it was boiling on his room. Signing he turned to grab his phone while rolling off the bed, it was only around one in the morning. Feeling the exhaustion from his lack of food, Tommy went straight for the kitchen not bothering to even be quiet knowing his footsteps were never loud and who would even be up at this time?

He was wrong. Entering the floor downstairs his eyes first caught Phil passed out on the kitchen counter, it looked rather uncomfortable as he was still magazine to stay dotted but Tommy tried not to pound over the pain Phil's back would be in tomorrow.

The second thing he noticed, well he didn't, Wilbur made his own presence known from the couch, calling out "He was worried about you, you know? Stayed up drinking coffee in case you'd come down."

Tommy turned to get closer to him, walking over to the couch where Wilbur was cuddled up next to a sleeping Techno and he proceeded to flop backwards onto it, completely disregarding his initial plan to get food.

Wilbur spoke up again now he was closer, this time in a whisper while he ran his hands through Techno's pink silky hair, "you know Techno struggles with the environment of school as well, if that's what your worried about."

It was what Tommy was worried about at the surface, but he knew going to school meant messing up, whether that was on tests or in lessons. He couldn't take the pressure of one wrong move, and he's out. But this time it's not just back to the group home, it's relocation and he can't lose Ranboo.

Wilbur, seeing Tommy distress, placed a hand on Tommy's hand although it proved difficult with Tommy being upside down on the couch. "Seriously Toms, worst comes to worse, you can be home schooled." A chill ran down his spine from that sentence, never again will he do home schooling.

He quickly nodded, "Yeah I'll go." his voice barley a whisper as he went to grab his food from the kitchen and ran back upstairs. Although Wilbur didn't get a chance to respond, Tommy had seen how his eyes lit up at Tommy agreeing to go, it's better then home schooling.

The morning had been strange, even on Tommy's standards, breakfasts hadn't been too bad but when Wilbur announced Tommy was joining them at school today, Phil still looked apprehensive not wanting to trigger what occurred last night. With minimal convincing Tommy had found his way into school, where he'd be dragging through his lessons all day.

He was halfway there when it came to the lesson before lunch break, homeroom, which seemed to be where the teacher he would have the misfortune of seeing everyday. He smiled at Tommy introduced himself as Mr Nook, he seemed nice enough. He directed Tommy to sit in the available chairs at the back, apologising for the lack of people there.

Not that Tommy minded, he'd rather not deal with the strangers. As he approached his seat at the back he noticed the boy next to him, even though he was just told he was alone at the back, the boy seemed to be smiling at Tommy.

Then it clicked. This wasn't just any random boy, this was Tubbo, his Tubbo, his best friend. Rushing he sat down in the empty seat next to Tubbo, zoning out Mr Nook's voice and turning towards Tubbo, "what are you doing here?" his voice came out as a harsh whisper even though the excitement shone through. The boy in front of Tommy turned and gave him a weird stare, but Tommy ignored it, returning his gaze to Tubbo.

"Well there's only two schools around here Tommy, either with me or the one Ranboo is at." Tubbo had replied in the same hushed whisper, smiling at Tommy. "It's good to see you Tommy," Tommy nodded back at Tubbo's remark.

"Yeah you too Big Man."

The two spent the rest of the day together during lunch break and computer science which they both had together.

Tommy truly couldn't erase the smile from his face, his Tubbo was back, his childhood best friend. He couldn't wait to tell Ranboo.

After hearing the school bell ring and parting ways with Tubbo, he began walking to his current home, Will had driven him in the morning on his way to college but apparently Techno preferred to walk and it meant Tommy had to also walk back now that Wilbur was busy. But he didn't mind, he was on a high from his first day at school.

He briefly wondered which way Techno walked home, assuming they would've ended up seeing each-other. Although another part of his brain is a bit thankful he didn't see him, they hadn't really spoken as much as Wilbur and Tommy, and he didn't even know if Techno liked him that much.

Once he reached the house, he ran straight up to Wilbur's room, the front door had been unlocked meaning Techno must have already been home and Tommy assumed Phil was still at work or maybe in his office.

He threw his bag down on his bed on the way to Wilbur's, and then briefly stopped after climbing the sketch stairs into the attic to ask if he could actually come in. Hearing a rushed out response of yes Tommy climbed the full way in, where Techno was sat on Wilbur's bean bag stimming away at a fidget cube and Will was softly strumming on his guitar strings, by his window.

The sight of the window brought slight panic to Tommy, Wilbur had gone out onto the roof with him that first night and he said he did it quite often before, did he climb down the roof onto the more flat area of the second floor roof? That seemed rather risky.

Wilbur caught him staring at the window with a pondering look, his brain clicking onto what Tommy was thinking about, he glanced at Techno who seemed too distracted to listen and decided to speak up, "I go out from Phil's office, but I used to from your room."

Tommy nodded, shaken from his thoughts, until he thought about the fact Wilbur's routine had become messed up from his arrival. Although Wilbur didn't seem fazed in the slightest, inviting Tommy to sit beside him on his bed.

Climbing on, Tommy began to announce to Wilbur about his day at school, stopping abruptly, shyly looking to Wilbur realising he's just decided to tell him about school and his day without him asking but Wilbur didn't mind. In fact his face held encouragement to continue, so he did.

He told Wilbur, and Techno he supposed as he was also in the room, about Tubbo, his excitement showing through his words to have his best friend back.

Wilbur nodded, looking up from his guitar to smile and used a hand to ruffle Tommy's golden hair, "I'm glad you had a good first day," Tommy shrugged at that.

Wilbur laughed at his response "Okay, I'm glad you had a good time being reunited with Tubbo." Tommy nodded at that, smiling and thinking of all the mischief him and Tubbo will get up to.

Although Tommy had assumed Techno wasn't listening-his voice begged to differ, a small monotone voice began "You are welcome to invite Tubbo over anytime." and he ended with that. Wilbur seemed shocked at the statement but turned to nod in agreement to Tommy. Meaning Tommy couldn't tell if the statement was the truth or not. He probably wouldn't invite Tubbo anyway he wouldn't like that.

After dinner, Tommy heard the familiar tap on his window, knowing it was Wilbur inviting him out again he swung himself out of the bed and approached the window.

Climbing out he stared at Wilbur laying with his guitar resting on his side, Tommy sat down with him, Wilbur didn't say anything, he just gently started to play the guitar.

Memorised by the stars, but still tired from the draining day, Tommy fell into an in between of half-falling asleep besides Wilbur, silently praying in his head that this would become a familiar routine for him.

He wanted a few good moments to latch on from his time here.

Beside him he felt a weight shift- keeping his eyes shut he could tell what was happening, Wilbur was moving closer to him and Tommy didn't mind curling into him.

Wilbur gently played a few more songs, enjoying the company that they had together, but soon told Tommy it was probably time for them to both go to sleep. Tommy too sleepy to reply nodded lightly and hopped back into his room, letting Wilbur use the exit out.

He climbed into bed and grabbed his phone

knowing he needed to apologise to Ranboo for not messaging him earlier that he was okay.

And of course to tell him about Tubbo.

hey big man! sorry for not messaging you sooner, had a rough night yesterday, but I'm safe . - tommy

it's okay, I'm glad you are okay tom - ranboo

Tommy waited a moment, thinking about how to let Ranboo know Tubbo was at his new school.

so I started a new school... - tommy

that's cool do you like it - ranboo

yeah it's okay I mean tubbo is there so it's kinda pog - tommy

Ranboo didn't reply straight away this time, Tommy decided to get comfortable ready to sleep until his phone lit up again.

tommy you need to tell them, it's getting worse again - ranboo

Tommy ignored the message, he wouldn't let Ranboo ruin his mood. Ranboo should be happy for him, he had Tubbo back.

Whatever. He was happy. He didn't need Ranboo.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

tw - panic attacks/sensory overload

i think the trigger warnings give a hint to what this chapter is about...

also if I need to add any other ones please let me know <3 also if you do need to skip a chapter lmk and I can give you a summary.

Everything seemed to go wrong on the Friday. It was coming to the end of Tommy's first week, the cycle of school with Tubbo, homework, dinner and then hanging out with Wilbur on the roof-top had become his daily routine.

The rooftop time was his favourite bit of the day; well he would admit that to Tubbo, but it was. Wilbur and Tommy would share non-important facts, like how Will hated anteaters, or on particular rough nights, Wilbur would just strum his guitar and sooth Tommy with his humming.

Tommy had also been ignoring Ranboo the entire week after his last text, it didn't stop Ranboo from texting to check he was okay. Still Tommy ignored him.

Ranboo wasn't the issue with the Friday though. In fact, the day had started out pretty good, he'd woken up to pancakes, his favourite and Phil was asking him about Tubbo and how he was welcome anytime.

Tommy had shrugged at that comment. He knew he was welcome to invite people round, Phil had tried to make it clear it was just as much his home the entire week.

Although he still didn't believe it and Tommy didn't feel too keen on asking Tubbo to come round anyway, Tubbo had been great the entire time they'd reunited, almost like things never changed, but something had changed.

Something Tommy couldn't quite comprehend.

The day had continued fine as well, Phil offered a ride to school since it was raining. Tommy insisted he'd walk though, because it was only light rain and he liked his morning walks.

His regret was clear when he saw Tubbo laughing at him in school because Tommy was to lightly put it, drenched.

Tommy had quickly sent a text to Phil asking him to pick him later and dragged Tubbo to homeroom slightly aggressively as his friend mocked him for being an idiot walking out in this weather.

Which brought him to now at lunch with Tubbo.

He tried to not let the rain situation ruin his day but his wet clothes clinging to him was making him rather uncomfortable. He'd long lost his appetite to eat as well, sliding his food to Tubbo, who would usually happily eat it, but this entire week Tubbo had simply refused and just went back to his fiddling.

Tubbo didn't have a school bag. Which Tommy thought was weird, but then again he didn't want to pry. He'd told Wilbur on one occasion and Wilbur had too been concerned if Tubbo was okay and told Tommy to look out for any signs of abuse.

He thought about asking now, what did he have to lose?

"Hey Tubs you kn--"

"Why are you always alone?" A voice sneered at Tommy, he looked up to some random teen who interrupted him. Tommy ignored the boy, grabbing Tubbo's hand and walking to his next class, Tubbo following with no complaints.

Tommy finished the rest of his lessons that day in slight anger at the random boy, he had Tubbo, why bother with other people when he had Tubbo. Besides he'd overheard a handful of his classmates using slurs, why on Earth would he want to be friends with people like that.

He walked out expecting to find Phil in his signature green car. Instead he saw Techno in his own grey car, over his time staying with the Watsons, he knew Techno hated driving and hated that car even more. It made too many noises, too many loud noises. Techno didn't like loud noises.

That wasn't Tommy's only worry, the fact Techno was picking him instead of Phil just meant Phil was caught up in work, the issue was not Phil missing, it was that Techno was here.

Techno and Tommy hadn't spoken as much as him and Wilbur, he kinda knew in the back of his head Techno must not really like him.

Still he approached the car and proceeded to get in. Techno didn't seem to talk, so Tommy settled with a hello, greeting Techno and just let the music wash over the silence they had.

They got about halfway- before disaster struck.

Well it wasn't a disaster to Tommy, the car had creaked a little too much the entire ride. Until with a loud final grunt it stopped working completely.

Techno had called both the repair company and Phil, only one picked up and showed up. Which left them to now stuck on the side of the road, without a car and Techno still kept trying to reach Phil.

It was still raining on top of that.

Techno looked stressed. His shoulders were tense and his long pink hair was completely flat against his body from the rain, he had sat onto the cold floor as well. Tommy figured if Phil wasn't picking up, he needed to get Techno out of the rain himself. Something else was going on, more than the car.

"Hey Big man, let's go walk further down the road, there's a bus stop up ahead," Tommy suggested, knowing from his walks to school.

Techno at first didn't respond, but let out a whine of approval before standing and walking ahead of Tommy. He decided not to pry into what was going on with Techno, but he tried to hope it wasn't his doing that Techno was sitting with his knees to his chest on the bus ride back, rocking back and fourth.

It's all your fault you did this.

Tommy tried to block out the thoughts, knowing it wasn't his fault the car broke down or the rain was so heavy or that Phil couldn't pick him up or pick up the phone.

Techno wouldn't have had to pick you up if you weren't here.

He couldn't think of a counter argument to that and after they reached there stop and Techno practically ran off the bus, sparing a second to glare at Tommy before rushing in the house. He knew the voice was right.

Tommy stared at the open door, contemplating running away in that moment, he didn't want to know what Phil would do to him if he knew Techno's state was because of him.

He almost did it. But the storm was too much, it would've been a cold hideout and his phone was on the verge of dying, he'd have no way to let Ranboo know. Even if he wasn't on speaking terms with him.

Casting aside his plan, Tommy approached the door opening it to find Wilbur and Phil riding from the coach. From Wilbur face Tommy could tell the reason Phil hadn't been responding to Techno was to comfort him.

Although it wouldn't have been a problem if you weren't here.

Phil bounced up to greet the two, but Techno was already running for his room, slamming it shut. Tommy briefly could hear Phil and Wilbur discussing what to do, at least he thinks, he couldn't really hear anything but the ringing in his ears.

This is all your fault.

If you weren't here Techno would be okay, everyone would be okay.

Everyone would be better if you left.

All you do is cause problems.

The voices were too loud. Tommy couldn't breathe. He could faintly hear the sound of a whisper in front of him, the shorter figure of Phil that he couldn't quite make out. Tommy decided to drop to the floor, clutching his knees closer. This felt like hell.

This wouldn't be happening if you weren't here .

"Tommy?" Phil's voice was getting clearer, but it wasn't enough. Tommy's vision blurred, the voice only becoming more unbearable.

He couldn't do it anymore.

"Shut up, please, please just go away, please." He begged the voice, with his throat feeling hoarse with the shout.

"Tommy please, just breathe with me, in and out." Phil's voice shook, "I promise I'll be quiet, but I can't leave you alone like this." Tommy could hear the pleading in his voice, he wanted to try for Phil.

Oh look now you've made Phil even more upset, first Techno, now him?

"Shut up. Please." Tommy begged once more. This time it didn't return. Phil had disappeared from in front of Tommy, but once again returned with a weighted blanket placing it on Tommy's shivering body. He also seemed to close the front door which Tommy had left open in his panic.

"I'm so sorry Phil," his voice barely above a whisper.

Phil bent down to Tommy's level, guiding him up into the sofa, Tommy followed not having the energy to dispute the decision.

"Tommy, you have nothing to apologise for, having a panic attack is not your fault nor is it something I would shame you for."

Phil didn't understand. He was misunderstanding what Tommy was apologising for.

"No Phil, I'm sorry, for Techno-" his voice cutting himself off, it sounded scratched up. Phil didn't interrupt though, letting him finish "It's my fault, Techno was upset from the car and then the rain and it's because of me." Tommy's words tumbled out in a somewhat coherent manner, he waited anticipating Phil to look disappointed.

Instead Phil placed a hand on Tommy's, in what Tommy regarded as soothing. Phil sighed, his face left with a contemplating expression.

"I suppose this is my fault for not letting you know sooner, although I did want Techno to be able to tell you himself." He pauses, "but it's causing you distress thinking it's your fault, which is really isn't."

Tommy shook his head, it was clearly his fault, Techno even glared at him. "This wouldn't be an issue if I wasn't here."

Phil frowned at that, “Tommy, this isn’t your fault. Techno being overwhelmed by his surroundings is because he gets sensory overload, Techno’s autistic.” Phil’s voice soothed in an attempt to calm Tommy. “That has nothing to do with you, I promise.”

Tommy didn’t respond after the statement, pausing to process what Phil had told him, Techno’s autistic?

“What does that mean?” Tommy decided to question, hoping his tone held the aim that he wanted to know what it meant for Techno.

Phil smiled at Tommy’s voice no longer shaking, raising an eyebrow at the question. Tommy seemed to pick up he needed to expand on what.

“Like I know what autism is, but I don’t know much about it other than the bullshit ableist stereotypes. What does Techno not like?” Tommy huffed out.

Phil only grins further from Tommy’s words, “I appreciate you wanting to know more Tommy, but the best person to ask is Techno, him and Wilbur are pretty good at calling out that ableist bullshit as you said.” His fingers making gestures at “ableist bullshit.”

Phil’s pretty cool, Tommy thought, a lot of his past guardians would call him out for swearing. Tommy nodded at Phil, both sitting in each other’s presence for the moment, until a scream caught their attention.

“Was that Techno?” Tommy’s word shaking once more, “is he okay?”

“Woah Tommy, take a deep breath in first okay?” Phil guided with Tommy following the intrusions “Techno’s with Will, I trust Will, Techno’s going to be okay, alright?”

Tommy nodded while still calming his breathing once more, “shouldn’t we go up to check though?”

“Yeah we will, but first I need to ask, have you ever considered seeing a psychiatrist Tommy?”

Tommy’s heart sped up, he wasn’t crazy, why would Phil want him to see a shrink?”

Because all you do is cause problems.

That damn voice. It was back. Yet this time Tommy didn’t scream for it to go away, he clenched his eyes shut, tapping on his knees.

Phil seemed to notice the change, quickly speaking up, “Tommy you of course don’t have to, but the boys and I’ve all noticed you tend to stim a lot, even right now see?” Tommy opened his eyes to see Phil point at his hand fiddling away.

“That doesn’t make me crazy.” Tommy whispered.

He felt Phil’s hand grip tighter around his own, “No it doesn’t, but crazy isn’t really my favourite word, I just think you do display a few neurodivergent traits and I know it took ages

for Techno to find the support he wanted.” Phil sighed. “I just want to give you the same opportunity, or at least know it’s available to you if you want it.”

Tommy could settle with that, he could settle with having the choice.

“Maybe not yet?” Tommy decided. Phil nodded.

After the discussion, they both head upstairs to find Techno on Wilbur’s room. Techno lying on the bed while Wilbur played gentle melodies on his guitar from the bean bag.

Phil announces he’s going to go start on dinner once he’s sure Techno is okay Tommy assumes. Tommy decided to make his way onto Wilbur’s bed, enjoying when the three of them spent time together in pointless chatter.

Today was different though, although Wilbur continued to play his guitar, Techno sat in silence with his eyes clenched, while Tommy bummed along to the tune. At some point, Tommy feels a hand reach out and grab his. He turns to find Techno’s eyes still shut, but an unspoken agreement falls between them.

The touch was comforting and soon Tommy closes his eyes too.

When Phil comes to call them down for dinner, he finds the two curled into each-other on the bed, fast asleep and Wilbur laying on the bean bag with his guitar collapsed on him and drool coming out the side of his mouth.

Phil smiled, closing the light after replacing Will’s guitar with a blanket and covering Techno and Tommy with a different one.

He made his way down to the sofa downstairs, collapsing himself with a grin on his face due to the thought that his boys were all getting along.

He too fell asleep with that kind thought.

Chapter 5

“Argh these damn bells!” Tommy exclaimed to Tubbo, his frustration shining through.

Tubbo decided to stay silent instead of laugh at Tommy’s misery as he usually does, but Tommy appreciated it in this circumstance.

Someone stupid had broken the school lunch bell, causing it to constantly go off at random times in the day. Tubbo had accused Tommy of breaking them when it first happened at the beginning of the week but he profusely apologised after seeing Tommy’s distress towards the noise throughout the week.

Wilbur himself had not shut up about it all week at the dinner table, telling Techno how glad he should be that he wasn’t there and secretly Tommy agreed. After the whole sensory overload mess that happened he’d been super cautious about not setting Techno’s off, he’d even began lowering his voice around Techno.

At first Techno appreciated the sentiment, but after a week of Tommy not being, well Tommy, he’d sat Tommy down and explained to him exactly what set him off. So Tommy returned to his loud self but he still researched as much as he could, he wanted to for Techno as first but in the end just found out more reasons for himself to be assessed for his neurodivergent traits.

Wilbur himself had made an offhand comment about Tommy maybe having ADHD, during one of their midnight talks and Tommy had relished in the fact that it all made sense. How he acts, his stimming, his inability to concentrate in school and his sensory overload.

It was the morning after that talk that he agreed with Phil to go be assessed, the results were exactly what he was expecting.

Phil had also persuaded Tommy into just one therapy session. He’d felt a sense of relief when he was taught that his brain was just hardwired differently rather than him being a brat like he’d been told ever since the car crash. The therapist had been super cool, Tommy had thought she was amazing, but he still ended the session with the same mindset as before. He didn’t want therapy.

In moments like this with his sensory overload, he slightly regrets his decision before. Puffy, the therapist had suggested they could find some ways to adapt to his sensory overload and he really would love that information right about now.

He sighed pushing his hands on top of his ears, trying to block out the noise while him and Tubbo made a beeline for the exit of the school.

It had been coming up to a month of Tommy stay at the Watson residence, and as much as he didn’t want to admit it. He really loved it here. He tried to convince himself it was only because of Tubbo, but even Tubbo gave him looks of disbelief anytime he mentioned it.

Today, Phil had allowed Tommy to go out with Tubbo after school, although Phil did slyly mention once again that he really wanted to meet Tubbo. Tommy had ignored his request, pretending he hadn't heard it and relished in the fact he and Tubbo would finally be hanging out, out of school.

It also meant when they walked out the exit that Techno wouldn't be waiting for him in Phil's car, after the incident Techno made it a routine to pick Tommy. It panicked Tommy quite frankly, not wanting Techno to be overwhelmed, especially when he didn't mind walking but in some strange sense Techno claimed he really wanted to pick Tommy.

Apparently it was just as important as Tommy's and Wilbur's nightly talks on the roof, which Tommy found weird that Techno knew about and felt obligated to invite him to join them. Thankfully Techno had declined, claiming once again it was just as important as these drives or Wilbur and Techno's morning routine.

He didn't know what their morning routine was, but he figured it was better that way.

Tubbo had pulled Tommy out his thoughts, grabbing his arm and taking him towards the direction of a small park bench, enclosed by a lake. Tommy briefly recognised the place from when he used to walk back from school. The only way to the park bench was across the bridge which clearly wasn't meant for use anymore.

The sign left there to warn people not to use the bridge had fallen apart itself as well. However the bridge didn't look completely unredeemable, Tubbo clearly thought the same as Tommy as he bounced across it.

Tommy tried not to dwell on Tubbo's lack of hesitance. He found Tubbo to not be quite the same as he used to be, but Tommy himself hid secrets he couldn't judge. Even if his secrets were never from Tubbo.

Tubbo lays sheepishly on the grass, right next to the bench leaving Tommy the space to hang off the bench. It wasn't even close to summer, but the sun rays shone through the canopy above them, they both soaked in the moment.

Freedom. For once in his life Tommy felt a deep rooted sense of freedom. It was moments like these he didn't feel guilty for not dying in the crash with his parents, moments where he knew the time spent would last as memories forever.

He stared down at Tubbo, his entire expression radiating calmness. Tubbo wasn't a calm person, at least Tommy wouldn't say he was. They always used to get up to all kinds of trouble and Tubbo was always the mischievous one of the two, but somehow in that moment Tubbo wasn't Tubbo.

"I really miss you Tubbo." The words tumbling out before he could stop himself.

Tubbo turned rising up on his arms, "You mean you missed me Tommy, past tense, I'm here right now."

Tommy nodded, pretending to agree but all his mind could wonder was *are you though?*

Not wanting to fall into silence again, Tommy pointed out a bee, knowing mentioning them would cause Tubbo's tangents as he liked to call them.

He zoned out Tubbo's voice, for at least 15 minutes, expecting the long bee talks. Until Tubbo mentioned climbing a tree, grabbing Tommy's attention once again.

"Well the Bees can fly, why can't we?"

Tommy deadpanned, "Tubbo we aren't bees."

Tubbo pouted. Tommy had given in.

Both approached the oak tree, Tubbo hoisted Tommy up, giving Tommy the better view while Tubbo pulled himself up knowing Tommy would fail.

They both sat comfortably on the thickest branch of the tree, swinging their legs back and forth while the sun began to set. Tommy's head rested on Tubbo's shoulder, despite the boy being vastly smaller than him, the height difference made it no less comfortable.

Tubbo hummed a tune familiar to Tommy from their childhood, a song which comforted them both, it wrapped their minds in sentimental bliss.

Tommy was glad he had Tubbo back, his doubts from earlier seemed to descend into nothingness. Although his mind couldn't not wonder to Ranboo, he hadn't spoken to the boy since their disagreement, he shared his concerns with Tubbo once more.

"I'm just worried, I miss him." Tommy unwrapped from Tubbo's shoulder, "if you tell him that I swear Tubbo-" Tubbo placed his hand on Tommy's mouth before he could continue his empty threat. Tommy licked his palm, resulting in disgusted looking expression on Tubbo.

While wiping the saliva back onto Tommy they both let out a stream of giggles before fighting. They both promptly stopped remembering their position in the tree.

"Tubbo seriously though, I should block him, he's annoying me."

Tubbo didn't respond, a smile from before never leaving his face.

Tommy's complaints never stopped, he grumbled pulling out his phone and pulled up his messages with Ranboo.

tommy you need to tell them, it's getting worse again - ranboo

The message stared back at his face.

Sighing Tommy covered the phone from Tubbo's view. Tubbo noticed the change in Tommy's demeanour, "You okay Tommy?" his voice barely a whisper, worried for Tommy.

"Yeah Tubs, I'm okay. I promise. I just-" Tommy sighs, shrugging "I should probably text him shouldn't I?"

Tubbo nodded in agreement, “as long as he doesn’t make you feel worse Tommy, you’re the most important.”

Tommy smiled, appreciating Tubbo’s presence. He sighed, tucking his phone away.

Tubbo had been a godsend the last few weeks, everytime Tommy would fall into panic, mainly about Techno disliking him, Tubbo would reassure the blond that he was overthinking and how Techno wouldn’t offer to pick him up if he hated him. Tommy supposed it must be the truth if it was coming from Tubbo.

Tommy knew he was poggers and big man but the reassurance didn’t hurt.

The pair sat peacefully until Tommy’s phone pinged from a message Phil sent, reminding him to head back before it was dark.

They parted ways when they reached Tommy’s house, but not before Tommy offered Tubbo to join them for dinner. He expected the response he received, Tubbo smiling softly while shaking his head.

“I think we both know that’s not a good idea Tommy,”

And with those final words Tubbo turned and disappeared into the distance.

When Tommy entered into the Wastons Household, he noticed no one was on the couch, but the smell of freshly baked potatoes and Techno’s voice hinted they were in the kitchen.

He approached the door, abruptly stopping on hearing his name.

“I’m just worried I’ve never seen him with anyone.” Techno’s voice echoes.

Tommy turns the corner to see Wilbur giving Techno his hand to stim with. It was another thing Will had let him know about Techno; he doesn’t like physical touch all that much but there was other ways to comfort Techno which still met his preferences.

Tommy tried not to eavesdrop and coughed to gain the others presence, but he remained unnoticed. Wilbur began to talk about Tubbo always being with Tommy, at least how Tommy told them they were always together.

Was Techno worried Tommy was lonely?

No why would he care about you ?

At least Wilbur was reassuring him, Tommy was always with Tubbo. Just because Techno hadn’t seen him when he picked him up doesn’t mean Tommy didn’t have friend.

The three carry on conversing around the table until Tommy decides to make his entrance, approaching his seat next to Phil.

Not your seat, just the empty seat remember.

Hearing the words echo through his mind Tommy remembered Phil's kindness offering to pay for his therapy. Thinking he might need to take him up on that offer.

Tommy could still visibly notice Techno's distress as he joined them to eat, but he ignored it as best he could answering Phil's questions about his day out.

"Yeah we climbed on this one massive tree, it was so poggers Phil." Tommy blurted, excited to change his mind away from their earlier conversations.

Phil looked a bit concerned from his words, but Tommy reassured him that Tubbo and Tommy were big men and could handle a mere tree.

"You should invite Tubbo for dinner next time Tommy, he's always welcome." Phil encourages, Tommy pauses noticing how both Techno and Will look up to him, waiting in anticipation for his answer.

Tommy nods slowly agreeing, "Sure big man." Although his mind skips back to when Tommy had just asked Tubbo to come round and Tubbo just grimaced.

Nevertheless the four continued on with their meal, enjoying eachother's stories of the day and by the end Techno had even relaxed, enjoying the laughter that they all shared.

At some point, Tommy didn't really remember how, Wilbur, Phil and himself started throwing the desert at eachother. All knowing to avoid Techno, partly because it would hurt if he retaliated but their minds also considering his sensory overload. It didn't stop him from cheering on Tommy, while he smacked another piece of cream onto Wilbur's face.

In that moment, Phil called it a night, telling them to all go off and shower. Which lead to Tommy and Wilbur climbing up onto the roof earlier then usual.

"You know it's nearly been a month since I got here-" Tommy starts, Wilbur turned to face him, encouraging him to continue, "I don't know it's weird, I don't actually hate it here."

Wilbur tilts his head back, grinning at Tommy, "So you don't hate it here is what I'm hearing?"

Tommy smiled, "Yeah I guess that is what I'm saying."

Will's grin only grew, pulling Tommy closer and ruffling his hair, "Good because your not getting away from me that easily, you're my little brother now."

Tommy scoffs at the mess of his hair now, but doesn't disagree with the statement and neither does the voice in his head.

Wilbur and him stay on the roof for at least another a hour talking nonsense, eventually Tommy decides to go in himself.

Upon hearing Wilbur's faint footsteps into Phil's office and back upstairs, Tommy pulled himself into bed. His phone light gleaming back up at him.

Hey Boober - tommy

Ranboo's reply is almost instantaneous.

Did you tell them? - ranboo

Tommy sighs, maybe it wasn't a good idea.

There's nothing to tell them Boob boy - tommy

Tommy still replies hoping the nickname will cause a reaction, and they can move on from the topic.

Tommy man - ranboo

At the last response Tommy gives up, placing his phone back onto the desk and once again silencing Ranboo's messages.

He was happy, with the Wastons and with Tubbo, he didn't need Ranboo.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

shouldn't be any trigger warnings for this one! enjoy!

also I haven't been proof reading the chapters so please let me know if there's any spelling or grammar mistakes lmao I'm not offended

It was April 9th. Although Tommy hadn't expected much, the simple thoughts of spending his birthday with his new home excited him. But as the morning progressed, Tommy was quick to realise, no one knew about his birthday.

The day was special to him, but Techno and Wilbur greeted him like every other morning, even Phil didn't blink an eye at Tommy's overly excited behaviour.

He knew this was his mistake, it's not like he could remember mentioning his birthday. Yet some part of him still felt betrayed for getting his hopes up. Phil, Techno and Will had been the best foster home he'd ever been with, but even the other homes had greeted him with a happy birthday.

Tommy tried to drop the disappointment he'd carried the whole day after breakfast, before heading to see Tubbo at lunch.

Upon seeing Tommy, Tubbo grabbed his arm, dragging them down to their usual table. Tubbo smiling brightly, while bouncing up and down in his seat.

"Happy birthday Tommy!" Tubbo exclaimed while throwing his hands up in a jazz motion. Tommy tried to hide himself under his arms, to avoid embarrassing glances at him and Tubbo, but peaked to realise no one noticed them.

Right they were practically invisible to this school.

Now that worry was handled, Tommy turned to Tubbo to glare at him, but Tubbo only shepally grinned in response. Tommy rolled his eyes at Tubbo's antics but smiled nonetheless, he appreciated him remembering.

Tubbo questioned Tommy on his down expression from earlier, but doesn't pry to avoid upsetting Tommy further.

"You know I didn't get you anything this year, but you know that letter I gave you, the one on the your last birthday before I didn't see you again." Tubbo began to frown as the last part of the sentence left his mouth.

Tommy nods in response, knowing he'd stashed the letter somewhere in his belongings he'd bought to Phil's. He promises Tubbo he'll read the letter later, parting from him to head to his afternoon lessons.

Tommy finds himself unable to focus on any work, his mind now plagued with wanting to finally read Tubbo's letter, instead of disappointment he felt previously from his foster family.

After the last school bell rings, Tommy runs for Techno's car, ready to finally get home and read the letter. Immediately Tommy could sense something was up with Techno. Techno had been fidgeting the entire ride, more so than usual. Tommy put it down to his sensory overload and tried not to overwhelm Techno any further with his eagerness to arrive home.

In his attempt to remain quiet, he hadn't noticed that Techno had stopped the car. This wasn't like the last time though, Techno had brought him to the outside of an arcade.

The flashing red welcome sign was already enough for Tommy to want to turn back, sending Techno's discomfort at the lights but his feet remained planted towards the entrance. Forcing them both in.

"I wanted to show you my favourite game," Techno grunts, not making a move to exit. Tommy can't fault his effort, although part of him wants to force Techno to leave, partly so he can see his letter but also the brother instinct in him couldn't allow Techno to put himself through this, not when Techno hated public places.

Yet Techno's determination forced Tommy to follow him, he had to appreciate the courage it took for Techno to do this. He smiles at Techno after reaching his favourite game, some weird combination of shooting game and strategy. They spend almost an hour fighting within the game, Techno always winning and complaining at Tommy for his lack of care towards the game.

Tommy had been trying though. It was no surprise Techno was good at his favourite game, to the point where any strategy Tommy would use, Techno already knew the counter.

Finally Techno had called the game quits, letting them leave, but not before using all his arcade tickets to buy Tommy a small rubix cube; reminding him he could always stim around Techno, no judgement.

Tommy had spent his tickets on candy floss, sharing half with Techno before they headed out.

Tommy returned home with a grin on his face, even if no one but Tubbo remembered his birthday, Techno had made his day with him sharing his favourite game. Wilbur had always been an open book with his special interests, but Techno hadn't revealed many to Tommy, him inviting Tommy to the arcade felt like an invitation fully into being brothers with him.

Tommy tried to brush away the brother talk, knowing he didn't have the right to claim Will and Tech as his own. Even if a small part of his mind really wanted to.

Upon entering through the door Techno steps aside letting Tommy take the lead. Tommy's heart drops, although he'd never admit it because he's a big man. The sight of Phil and Wilbur, holding a cake with 17 candles lined around, the sitting room decorated in deep blue and red balloons.

Tommy feels a damp tear tickle down his face, covering it up quickly as Will comes to engulf him in a hug.

"Happy birthday Toms," Will whispers into his ear, ruffling his hair as he pulls back. Phil holds the cake closer to Tommy, asking him to make a wish. Tommy gulps, trying not to cry further and blows out the remaining candles as one blew out from Phil trying to tip it towards him.

Tommy tries to smile, attempting to make his wish vocalised "I want a hug guys."

Phil laughed, placing the cake down and pulling Tommy in, followed by Will forcing Techno to join in until they are all hugging around Tommy. He lets out a small sob. He was genuinely happy.

"I thought you wouldn't know." Tommy claims as they all pull away. Tommy turns suspiciously towards Phil, "I guess it was on my file."

Phil smiled "no Tommy I don't read past the emergency issues section, I want you to open up on your own accord." Tommy nearly begins crying again on that message, but Wilbur speaks up before he gets the chance.

He ruffles Tommy's hair further while speaking "You mentioned it to me dumbass."

Laughing again Phil claims in that tone they should begin dinner. On the dinner table, lay a box wrapped up carefully, Tommy reached for it as soon as Phil gave him the go ahead.

Underneath the wrapping contained a phone box, Tommy tried to stop shaking after reaching for Phil to give him a proper hug once again.

They all continued into dinner as normal, explaining their plan to deceive Tommy, finally letting him know it wasn't malicious they just wanted him to get a birthday surprise.

Tommy assured them, mainly Phil, that it was okay. He didn't mind. Although he would've rather just celebrated the entire day he choose not tell Phil that though, planning to just make sure they wouldn't do it for his next birthday.

His next birthday. He'd been doing that a lot recently, talking about a future, here with Phil and Techno and Will. One home where he finally felt he belonged.

For once his mind doesn't argue against him. He grins, finishing his dinner and heading up to lay in his bed.

Tommy's focus only on his new phone led to hours of endless scrolling and a download app version of the game Techno and Tommy had played in the arcade. Tommy vowed to himself he'd get better and learn all of the strategies to beat Techno.

Tommy download discord too, wanting to quickly check Ranboo messages, a string of worried messages are followed by a happy birthday.

Tommy ignores the worried messages, replying with a simple last message.

thank you big man - Tommy

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

this one's a small one but vital to the plot lmao

next chapter is the max inspired scene and it's my favourite thing :D

enjoy!

Chapter 7

A sigh left Tommy's lips as he threw himself onto Wilbur's bed. Techno had driven him home from school and forced him straight up to Will's room, sensing his dampened mood.

Techno sprawled himself across the bean bag, letting Tommy join Wilbur in the double bed. All three of them lie in silence for a moment, trying to keep the little peaceful moments they found hard to discover. With all three brother simultaneously dealing with their own share of mental health problems, Tommy found they didn't offer themselves as much comfort as they offered eachother, often having to remind eachother to be kind to themselves.

There it was again that word, *brother* .

Tommy had been using the word more in his mind the longer his stay. Techno and Will, they weren't just foster siblings, they were brothers .

Tommy replaces the frown on his face with a small smile, creeping up on him just like his relationships with both his brothers. Pulling out his phone Tommy began to scroll through the photos Tubbo and he had took earlier in the day, the only highlight of his day, the rest had been swarmed with teachers telling Tommy his work ethic hadn't been good enough and if he kept it up, they'd be ringing home.

He'd told Techno when he got into the car, asking for his advice mostly, but also to sense out his reaction of what Phil's reaction would be. Fortunately for Tommy, Techno assured him, Phil would not be angry. Although part of Tommy clocked onto the fact Techno hadn't said he wouldn't be disappointed and Tommy dreaded the fact he was worried to disappoint Phil.

"Hey Toms, what you looking at?" Will reached for his phone in the process, but Tommy allured his movement quick enough that Wilbur hadn't had the chance to see anything.

"Just some photos me and Tubs took, not that it's any of your business," Tommy huffed jokingly, but part of him meant it.

“It’s ‘Tubbo and I’ Tommy.” Wilbur corrected, raising an eyebrow at Tommy’s defensive tone, “but you are wrong it’s totally my job to snoop into my baby brothers business.”

Tommy tried not to let his heart warm at the baby brother comment. He rolled his eyes at Will, knowing he was joking, “Shut up Will.” he spat, although there was no true anger in his voice.

“Come on let me see then, pleaseeeeeee,” Will enlongating the please only irks Tommy more, he shakes his head at Will and turns his back to him.

Wilbur decides to drop it, noticing Tommy’s tone laced with an undertone of panic, he turns to Techno and begins annoying his other brother.

Tommy stares at his photos with Tubbo, they had come out blurred from the two laughing too much. He shuts the photo, after turning it to his Lock Screen and turns back into Techno and Wilbur’s conversation.

Somewhere in the moment Tommy had turned them out, they had started arguing and seem to continue until Phil called them all down for dinner. Wilbur announcing “last one down there is cleaning the dishes” and leaving, followed by Techno rushing after him assured Tommy the argument wasn’t serious.

He tossed his phone into Wilbur’s bed and ran after the other two, laughing as he catches Wilbur trip on the stairs.

Ranboo’s POV .

Ranboo was tapping on the cafes table, visible anxious. It was coming onto a few weeks of Tommy’s stay at his new house and this had been the lowest amount of contact Ranboo had with Tommy since they met. It didn’t help that he knew nothing about Tommy’s family other then their names and how they’d been nice when Tommy met them.

That was weeks ago, facades tended to drop of fosters around week two, it was no surprise Ranboo was worried.

Niki, his foster guardian, was fairly young herself. She had only recently turned 20 but she already owned her own bakery, courtesy of her rich parents. Which although she appreciated, Niki did confide in Ranboo of feeling guilty for. She had told him the truth to her fostering teens to try spread her wealth, before the teens grew out of the system and were forced to fend for themselves. Ranboo loved Niki’s kindness, she even offered him double pay for half his shifts at the cafe.

Niki wanted Ranboo to be able to save up as much money as possible, in case he ever wanted to leave the town or go to college. Although he was always welcome to stay here for eternity Niki always reminded him.

Sliding over a piece of cake, Niki sat down next to Ranboo, intent to question the boys behaviour.

“Is everything alright Ranboo?”

Ranboo sighs, he’d already explained his worry to Niki before but it didn’t hurt to let her know again “It’s about Tommy.”

Frowning Niki pulls up Wilbur’s contact on her phone, when Ranboo has first expressed his concern for Tommy, he’d told Niki about the family he was staying with.

By some miracle Niki and Wilbur were friends, good friends even. Although Niki assured Ranboo that Tommy was safe with Will’s family, Ranboo was still concerned for Tommy falling back into his old habits.

It was dangerous.

Niki placed her hand on Ranboo’s, “I can still
contact Wilbur about what you told me Ranboo.”

Ranboo clenched his eyes shut. He needed to help Tommy. He couldn’t deal with the guilt of not doing anything.

Tommy needed serious help.

“Yeah Niki,” he whispers, his voice nearly breaking “Tell him the truth.”

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

tw - panic attacks, hallucinations

TIME FOR THE MAX INSPIRED SCENE

advice is to read this one with Running Up The Hill in the background :)

Tubbo talk had been persistent in the Watson household.

Wilbur would mention him every night, Phil every dinner and even Techno would question never seeing him at the end of school with Tommy.

Tommy got it. Apparently they just wanted to meet Tubbo, which in his head made sense, Tubbo was awesome and he made sure to let them all know it with constantly talking about their adventures and pranks in school, although Phil frowned at that last one.

Another night, Tommy helped wash the dishes down tonight, feeling gratitude for the family around him.

Another slip up.

It was all okay until big Wilbur had to open his mouth, pestering for him to invite Tubbo round.

Tommy rolled his eyes, he didn't bother answering Will knowing the answer would be the same.

Wilbur sighed, lightly chucking the wash cloth down at Tommy.

"Tommy can I see a photo of you guys?" Wilbur's voice laced with concern which Tommy cued out.

Tommy ignored him figuring he wasn't serious, but when he turned to see his expression, the realisation dawned on him; Wilbur was serious.

"No." He refuses, clenching his eyes shut. At this even Techno's and Phil's attention is drawn.

Wilbur puts his hand on Tommy's shoulder, trying to reassure him. Tommy opened his eyes staring into the teen he considered his brother.

Wilbur softly “Tommy are you sure Tubbo is real?”

Tommy feels blood rushing to his face, how could Wilbur even ask that? Does he not think Tommy could have friends?

He can sense the movement around him, Phil approaching him closer. Was Tommy panicking? His heart was thumping so loudly. He swiftly thought if Techno could hear, his sensory sensitivity meant he heard the smaller noises others wouldn't notice.

His thoughts deterred back away from Techno, focusing back in on the feeling of his chest closing in, like a heart attack. The pounding grew louder, while Phil, Techno and Wilbur's voices grew quieter, fading into the distance.

Clenching his fists, Tommy only began to panic more, letting a scream at Wilbur's attempt to touch him.

He needed to run.

Leave them. You don't deserve them. Go find Tubbo.

The voice was back, gruelling into his imagination.

Techno noticed too soon what Tommy was going to do, unable to block the front door from him as Tommy shoved past him. Techno let out a yelp, falling back letting Phil catch his arms.

Wilbur attempts to go for him, but Tommy is already out of sight. Rushing for the woods.

Tommy runs, he tries to run from the voices, from his new family, everything was too much.

The leaves above him trapping him from the moonlight. Tommy couldn't see. It didn't matter. He just kept running.

The clearing he reached, the same one him and Tubbo had spent the day together. He crossed the unstable bridge, running across.

Flashes in his memory of the time they had together.

The freedom he had felt. The freedom Tubbo and he had.

But then the other memories flashed, *“I really miss you Tubbo.” The words tumbling out before he could stop himself.*

Tubbo turned rising up on his arms, “You mean you missed me Tommy, past tense, I'm here right now.”

Tommy collapsed beneath the tree they had climbed.

Another memory creeping up on him, the moments at lunch where he had been with Tubbo, *“Why are you always alone?” A voice sneered at Tommy, he looked up to some random teen*

who interrupted him.

“Tubbo is real.” Tommy whispers to himself like a prayer. “He had to be real.” The tears kept falling.

Tommy pulls out his phone, blinking at the missed calls and texts. Some from Phil, Techno and Wilbur. Mainly Phil. Even Ranboo had messaged again.

He ignores them.

Clearing the notifications. He stares blankly at the phone, at the photo of him and Tubbo.

“He is real.” Tommy whispers once more.

Tommy hears the faint whistle of calls from Phil. He tunes Phil out.

Staring back his phone, the photo in the wallpaper once more.

A glimmer between the two of them smiling to the reality of Tommy smiling alone.

He wished he could’ve called Tubbo. He needed his voice. He needed the reassurance Tubbo was real.

Phil’s calls began to increase in volume, or he was getting closer. Tommy let out another scream, his frustration didn’t clear.

Footsteps could be heard creeping across the bridge. Tommy couldn’t bring himself to look tucking his knees to his chest and planting his head between his knees. Phil’s presence was hard to ignore, he calmly sat beside Tommy.

“You alright Mate?” Phil’s voice barley above a whisper, Tommy couldn’t find it in himself to respond, lightly lifting his head to show Phil he was at least responsive.

“It’s okay, you take all the time you need Tommy.” Phil’s voice held no menace, just reassurance that he was there.

Tommy turns his head to face Phil, tears dropping slower then before on his face.

“He’s real Phil.” Tommy pleads, not sure if he’s trying to himself or Phil.

“I read your file Tommy.”

“I thought you said you’d never do that.” Tommy voice quivered laced with betrayal.

“Unless it was for your safety Tommy, one of my rules, you know that.” Phil counters.

Tommy shook his head, “I’m fine. Everything is fine. Tubbo is real.”

Phil sighed, lowering his voice to a tone similar to Tommy’s “A friend told Wilbur that we should be worried Tommy, for your safety I had to read the rest of the file. I’m sorry for upsetting you, but not for protecting you.”

Tommy didn't respond at first, staring back at his phone. The light illuminating his now damp face.

Tubbo flicked between being there and not on the screen.

Tommy gripped himself closer. He stares at the phone and Tubbo stays there this time.

"He's real." he whispers.

Phil spoke up again "He was your brother right?"

was your brother. The words stung in Tommy's mind.

He turns to Phil reaching out for his hand then swiftly back at the photo. One final time. This time Tubbo wasn't there.

"He died that night in the crash Tommy. I'm sorry mate, but he's gone" Phil begins smoothly, trying not to drive Tommy further into his panic, but he needed to get the message across.

"These last few weeks, he hasn't been here, the photos, the lunches, everything you told us about, it wasn't real Tommy."

Nothing was real.

Tommy's eyes strained. He decided all he wanted was to curl up and disappear.

"He's gone." Tommy whispered tucking into Phil's shoulder crying.

The pair sit there watching the lake under the moonlight until Tommy calms.

After finding their way back to the house, Tommy and Phil part their hands. Wilbur and Techno, both waiting for Tommy's return. Wilbur pacing, while Techno sat bouncing on the dining chairs.

Simultaneously they both turn to face Tommy and Phil. They themselves had been searching, returning only when Phil can texted to let them know Tommy was safe with him.

Wilbur began profusely apologising to Tommy, but Tommy was too tired to care. He just walked into Wilbur and Techno's arms, embracing them both into a three way hug. Tommy's mind healing from the crying.

Phil watched his boys reunite, the silent agreement falling between them all to not worry till the morning.

Epilogue

Chapter Summary

hope everyone enjoyed!!

this is the ending to this book <3 I know it's kinda short and not well edited but I'm hoping everyone still liked it either way.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“It’s a been a few months since that night Tommy, do you want to start with it?” Puffy suggested.

Tommy paused, it was his choice. He liked having choices, he nodded in response to Puffy. He had started going to therapy after that night, although it wasn’t his choice that time. Phil had practically dragged him the house and forced him to attend his first few sessions. Now he didn’t mind, attending on his own accord.

“Tommy?” Puffy tries to catch his attention back.

Tommy nods, showing he was engaging.

“Well I wanted to let you know, you’ve made so much progress in our sessions.” Puffy begins, “How is it going at school?”

He knew she was asking about Ranboo and his friendship. It had been rocky at first, both sides struggling with what happened between them.

Tommy shrugged “yeah I mean transferring to a school with Ranboo was good for me, it’s nice he forgave me for completely ignoring him before.”

Puffy raised her eyebrows, “Did you forgive him for telling Niki Tommy, it goe-“

“both ways, yeah yeah I know.” Tommy cuts her off, “I know why he did it, I mean if I was I’d probably do the same.”

Puffy writes something down on her notepad.

“It is kind of you to recognise his intentions were good, although his actions were just the result of worry and anxiety.”

“It’s not like he could’ve just show up to my home, he has memory issues. He’d like forget where to go half way through and get lost.” Tommy countered.

Puffy sighed, writing more.

“What the fuck are you always writing?” Tommy asked his tone aggravated, but not intentionally mean.

Puffy smiled back, “so you called it your “home”.”

Tommy smiled at the thought, “I guess it is my home. Wilbur and Techno constantly used to correct me if I ever introduced them as foster brothers as well, I guess I am kinda part of the family.” Pausing at his next thought, whispering it to himself, “even if I’m technically not.”

Puffy picks up on it, questioning him, “so you want to be part of the family, officially?”

Tommy nodded, although he would’ve said it was dumb before. His mind craved being Phil’s son, legally.

“And how do you feel about Techno and Wilbur being you brothers?”

Tommy ponders at the thought, confused why Puffy’s tone indicated he’d mind. “Why wouldn’t that be a good thing?”

Puffy stares, not elaborating on the topic, waiting for Tommy to understand.

Tommy realised what Puffy meant, “Oh- OH, I don’t know, I don’t think Tubbo would be mad at me, I think-“ he pauses, “I think he’d be happy.”

“I’m proud of you Tommy, I’m sure he would be too.”

Tommy smiled, nodding in agreement.

They ended their session there, Tommy returning to the parking lot where he found Techno’s car.

Techno never asked about how therapy was. It was the best part about riding home with him. Tommy could talk if he wanted to but if not Techno would let the music fill the silence.

The routine was calming for Tommy.

Until today, the direction Techno turned was not towards home. Tommy decided not to question it, Techno knew what he was doing, Tommy was sure there was a reason. Probably one of his surprises.

He was even more sure when they turned up to the arcade; returning to the same game Techno had showed Tommy on his birthday.

Even stranger was the fact when they finished Techno hugged Tommy. Sure they had hugged before but Tommy always pulled in Techno because Techno wasn’t much of a hugger.

Nothing was said between them, they returned to the car.

Once they reached the house, Techno left Tommy with Phil rushing up the stairs to what Tommy guessed was Wilbur's room.

Tommy turned towards Phil, he was sat at the dinning table, his arms open invitation for Tommy to hug him.

Taking a step closer to hug him, Tommy pauses staring at the sheets littering the table. The paper catching his eye was neatly above everything else; placed perfectly as if Phil wanted him to see it.

Adoption papers.

Phil already began to cry, setting off Tommy. Hugging eachother tighter. Tommy signed the papers and they hugged some more.

After letting go, Phil explained to Tommy although the process takes a long time and he couldn't officially adopt him until the court approves, he did want Tommy to officially be his son on paper.

Later Tommy finds himself in Wilbur's room back on the bed, with Techno typing away on his laptop and Wilbur strumming his guitar near the window.

They all pause after Phil enters the room, asking if they want take out to celebrate, agreeing quickly they all rush downstairs together for dinner.

Tommy grin remaining on his face the entire time.

He was finally happy.

Wilbur and Tommy climbed onto the window when Ranboo text finally comes through, pinging Tommy's phone. He had asked Ranboo earlier in the day if they could meet up later at the bench.

Ranboo had obviously agreed and Tommy knew Wilbur promised to cover for his ass. Leaving Tommy rushing away from Wilbur and straight out the back door.

He already let Wilbur know why he needed to go so badly and Wilbur being Wilbur was too unbothered to mind that Tommy ditched their nightly talks for this bench.

He rushed towards the clearing, running across the unstable bridge towards the bench where Ranboo was already waiting with a disappointed frown.

“I told you not to run across that bridge.” He called, Tommy just laughed in response not bothering to give him an explanation.

After plopping himself down next to Ranboo on the bench the two remained in conversation, with Tommy telling Ranboo the news of the adoption.

With the night sky above them, Tommy heart became tender. “You know if Tubbo was here we’d be the bench trio.”

Ranboo nodded from the ground, he’d ended up there after Tommy had shoved him off the bench in amusement. They both stare at the stars, relishing in the moment.

Tommy phone is the first to ruin the moment, “It’s Wilbur, he’s letting me know to get home before Phil notices it’s too quiet.” Tommy rolled his eyes at Wilbur’s tone, despite the lack of tone indicators which Techno had tried to get them to start using during texting. Wilbur was still learning, clearly, he tended to forget a lot.

Ranboo and Tommy make a move to live the clearing, Tommy turns back one more time at the beach across the bridge. The moonlight seemed to be illuminating the bench, in the centre sat Tubbo. Smiling and waving at Tommy, pride glimmering in his eyes.

My own piece of goodbye .

Tommy smiled back, “goodbye brother.” He softly whispers under his breath.

With that Tommy turned and headed back to his home.

Chapter End Notes

lmao and that’s a wrap!! hope you enjoyed :D

this was posted a day before the news about techno came out. i just want to put a thank you to him <3

rest in peace techno. this story is dedicated to you king 👑

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!